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Subject: "Cooking to Conserve Electricity." Information from rural electrification experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Smart homemakers are always thrifty homemakers. And today household economy is important not only to the family but to the nation. We must all be careful not to waste in the kitchen, whether it be food or fuel.

Let's consider the conservation of kitchen fuel, particularly electricity. Hundreds of thousands of homes use electricity for kitchen fuel. So if you can learn a few simple ways to conserve electricity you'll be doing your country a service. Actually, in some sections of the nation a present or potential shortage of electricity exists. And even in regions now blessed by ample power, the pennies you save by economical use of fuel you can always invest in defense stamps.

So . . . here are thoughts to consider. And many of these fuel-and-money saving ideas apply when you're cooking with gas, or wood, or kerosene as well as when you're using electricity.

First, here are a few simple rules that will cut your fuel bill when you cook on the surface units of the range or hotplate. And, incidently, following these rules will help you to preserve the vitamins and minerals that are so vital to good health. Better make a note of these:

First, about your kettles and pans. Use flat-bottomed pans with close-fitted covers. Pans with straight sides save fuel better than pans with flaring sides. And use pans that are wide enough to cover completely the hot part of the unit. A small pan on a large unit lets precious fuel go to waste.



Use as little water as possible. This speeds up the cooking and cuts your fuel cost right there. It also reduces the loss of those vitamins and minerals that dissolve easily in water.

Remember, quick cooking protects vitamins and minerals while long exposure to heat, liquid and air destroys them. This is particularly true of vegetables and should be kept in mind when cooking with any fuel.

And another thing . . . always start your food cooking as quickly as possible. On an electric range turn your switch to "high" or full heat and then, when your food is cooking, switch back to the lowest heat for the remainder of the cooking period.

And conquer your curiosity . . . try not to remove the lid until cooking time is completed.

Most electric ranges have well-cookers -- that is, a kettle set down into insulated walls with the heating unit at the bottom of the "well." These well-cookers will cook rather large quantities of food with very little electricity. Well-cookers are particularly good for economical cooking of stews, roasts, brown bread, baked beans, puddings and other foods that require long cooking at low temperatures.

You can steam several kinds of vegetables at one time in a well-cooker provided you take them out just as soon as the electricity is turned off so their flavors won't mingle. Flavors and odors will not intermingle as long as there is active steam in the cooker. You can also use a well-cooker to cook entire meals for families of four or five, including dessert. Perhaps the nearest thing to a well-cooker for use with other fuels is a fireless cooker.

Now a word about skillet meals, for they're a great fuel and time saver. You can cook many pleasing combinations in one frying-pan or skillet at the



same time. For example, pork chops, peppers, browned onions and rice may be cooked at one time in a deep tomato sauce.

Heating an oven takes more fuel than heating a burner on the top of the stove, but when you cook a whole meal in the oven, you save fuel. Oven meals not only save you fuel but also require less of your time and attention during the cooking period. Saving fuel by cooking several foods at the same time applies to an electric roaster as well as to the oven. And it's not very difficult to plan your menu so that all of your dishes can be prepared in the oven at the same time.

When you place vegetables in the oven, use tightly covered pans or dishes. Those with flat covers take up less space. Arrange the pans so that there will be a free circulation of heat by allowing at least one inch of space between each pan and between pans and oven walls.

As a general rule, meats and vegetables go on the bottom rack, and batters and pastries on the top rack. Cook tender cuts of meats in shallow, uncovered pans.

If you have a thermostat on your oven, and most modern ranges do have them, depend on time and temperature control for guidance, and try to avoid peeking. Opening the oven door is very wasteful of heat.

Now for a few general tips. Turn your unit off before removing your pots or pans. With an electric range, turn it off considerable before cooking is finished because the burner holds enough heat to finish the job. Never turn electricity or gas on while you are preparing food for cooking unless your recipe calls for a pre-heated oven. And don't heat a whole kettleful of water when you need only two cups. By the way, heat water in the kettle or pan in which it is to be rather than first in the tea-kettle, and, of course, cover the container in which you are heating water.

Don't scrub the bottoms of your pans until they shine. A dull surface absorbs heat better than a bright, shiny one.

One last tip. If you cook by electricity and you live where there are a great many war industries, do as much of your cooking as you can before five o'clock in the afternoon when lights going on in homes and offices and factories cause greater strain on your power company's facilities.

That's all the tips today on cooking to conserve cooking fuel, particularly electricity.

